

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0936

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EWWT, EAID, EG

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS AT ALEXANDRIA PORT

REF: ALEXANDRIA 0599

1. SUMMARY - SURVEY OF SILOS PIERS AND ADJACENT AREAS FOR GRAIN UNLOADING LATE MORNING 14 JULY, PLUS TALK WITH AMERICAN OWNER'S AGENT, CONVINCES ME WE ARE APPROACHING CRISIS POINT IN PL-480 GRAIN DELIVERIES. WE MUST NOW SERIOUSLY CONSIDER EMBASSY URGING EGYPTIAN ARMY WHEELS AND MANPOWER TO SOLVE TRANSPORTATION BOTTLENECK AT ALEXANDRIA PORT. END SUMMARY

2. PROBLEM OF MOVING EVER-INCREASING ARRIVALS US PL-480 GRAINS AWAY FROM PIERS AT ALEXANDRIA PORT TO PERMIT FURTHER DELIVERY IS BECOMING CRITICAL. NEAR MID-DAY 14 JULY, PIERS 79 (NOW OCCUPIED BY MEDIUM-SIZE LEBANESE VESSEL LOADING EGYPTIAN AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS) AND PIER 80 (LASH BARGE UNLOADING PL-480 GRAIN DIRECTLY ON TO TRUCKS) WERE VIRTUALLY CLEAR OF GRAIN BACKLOG (REFTEL). HOWEVER, THIRD AND MAJOR GRAIN-HANDLING SIDE OF THIS QUAY, PIER 81, STILL STACKED WITH BULK OF 18,000 TONS PL-480 GRAIN IN SACKS RECENTLY ARRIVED ON LYKES LINERS, AND SS HALIFAX STAR (BRITISH) NOW ALONGSIDE WITH CARGO OF ARGENTIAN FROZEN MEAT IS IN THIRD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DAY OF FRUSTRATION.

3. THAT PIER (PART OF SILOS COMPLEX) IS AT RIGHT ANGLES TO MAIN SILOS PIER WHERE (A) SS MARATHA MELODY (INDIAN) IS ALMOST THROUGH OFF-LOADING ABOUT 30,000 TONS PL-480 GRAIN FROM BEAUMONT, TEXAS, AND (B) SS SANTA ANA (US-PURDENTIAL CHARTER) IS OFF-LOADING WHEAT AT ONLY CONVEYOR BELT DELIVERING DIRECTLY INTO SILOS. THEREAFTER

BOW OF SS VIRGO (US) AGAINST MAIN PIER AND STERN PERILOUSLY OUT INTO LESS SHELTERED HARBOR WATERS (REFTEL).

4. MOORED STERN TO AND BOW ANCHORED OFF BREAKWATER PROVIDING PARTIAL PROTECTION TO SILOS PIERS ARE (A) SS ARGIS BRAVERY (GREEK) WITH 23,000 TONS OF PL-480 CORN (SOME BEING OFFLOADED IN BARGES), WAITING DOCKING SINCE 5 JULY, (B) SS YELLOWSTONE (US) 15,000 TONS OF CORN WAITING DOCKING SINCE 7 JULY, AND (C) SS CAPTAIN YANNIS (GREEK) WITH 12,000 TONS OF CORN AND ABOUT EQUAL AMOUNT OF FLOUT, ARRIVED 10 JULY. DUE ON 17 JULY IS SS OGDEN CHALLENGER (US) WITH 32,000 TONS OF WHEAT WHICH MUST BE BAGGED ON PIER.

5. OFFLOADING, ONCE ALONGSIDE, IS QUITE EFFICIENT. PROBLEM IS THEREAFTER MOVING BAGGED GRAIN FROM PIERS. AS REPORTED REFTEL, 8,000 TONS A DAY ARRIVING ON PIERS, ONLY 5,000 TONS A DAY BEING HAULED AWAY.

6. FRMM PERSONAL OBSERVATION TODAY BUT WITHOUT TECHNICAL CAPACITY BE SURE, IT DOES SEEM TO ME PIERS AND ACCESS ROADS COULD HANDLE MORE TRANSPORT, WHERE BOTTLENECK OBVIOUSLY LIES. I AM TOLD AND MUST BELIEVE, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT SIMPLY DOES NOT HAVE ADDITIONAL TRUCKS TO ASSIGN THIS TASK.

7. FOR CAIRO - IN CONVERSATION TODAY WITH SENIOR UNDERSECRETARY OF MRITIME TRANSPORT MINISTRY, I TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON THIS PROBLEM. HE AGREED LACK OF SUFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION WAS HEART OF PROBLEM. HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DID POINT OUT THAT ONLY MINISTRY OF DEFENSE COULD COMMIT ARMY TO ASSIST. TWO DAYS EARLIER, WHEN I OUTLINED PROBLEM TO AMBASSADOR, HE SAID IT SOUNDED AS THOUGH ARMY ASSISTANCE WAS NEEDED. ON BASIS TODAY'S SURVEY AND PROSPECT OF ALMOST 100,000 TONS ARRIVING WITHIN DAYS ON SHIPS LISTED IN PARA 4, I AM CONVINCED TIME HAS COME FOR AMBASSADOR TO RAISE QUESTION AT VERY HIGH LEVELS OF GOE AND OF DEFENSE MINISTRY.

CHASE

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